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PRESS RELEASE

Supporting the recovery of Dominica's agricultural sector

Two farming communities in Dominica are well on the road to recovery following the devastation caused by the passage of tropical storm Erika to their operations in August last year. The Colihaut and Coulibistrie communities received seeds for open pollinated yellow corn, hybrid yellow corn and Red Kidney bean from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, courtesy of CARDI. The seeds were handed over by the Officer in Charge of the CARDI Dominica Unit, Dorian Etienne to Minister for Agriculture and the Environment, Johnson Drigo at the Division of Agriculture's Citrus Certification facility at the Botanic Gardens on Wednesday 17 February.

The CARDI Dominica Unit obtained these seeds from its sister unit in Belize which is Institute's center for the production of the cereals and grain legumes. The 200 pounds of open-pollinated yellow corn and 800 pounds of Red Kidney beans can potentially establish 10 and 20 acres respectively. CARDI also pledged to assist with the on-farm establishment of these crops by facilitating the transfer of technologies developed in Belize.

The production and supply of these seeds was supported under Component 2 of the, Caribbean Action under the Programme entitled Agriculture Policy Programme (APP) funded by the European Union and implemented by CARDI.

In its Rapid Damage and Impact Assessment report the World Bank estimated the damage caused by Tropical Storm Erika to Dominica at just over EC\$122 million. Apart from total crop loss and death of livestock, significant damages were reported to production facilities and infrastructure (irrigation and access roads). CARDI's Executive Director, Barton Clarke said that he is very pleased CARDI can assist Dominica in its re-building efforts. He said that the sector is very important to the 7,000 estimated farmers on the island and the seeds supplied will not just be for food and income but assist in building self-reliance and resilience to any future disasters.

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